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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2496

Feb. 22, 1991

CALIFORNIA FREEZE DISASTER -- President George Bush has declared a major disaster exists in California & ordered federal aid to help farming communities in portions of the state to recover from the effects of a severe winter freeze Dec. 19 - Jan. 3. Contact: William M. Medigovich (415) 923-7100.

TIMBER REVENUE UP -- USDA's Forest Service reports its 1990 timber sale program produced revenues of nearly \$1.4 billion, from a 10.5 billion-board-feet harvest. Revenues exceeded operating expenses for the year by \$629 million. "Over the past several years, the public has questioned the costs and benefits of timber sales on the national forests," says Forest Service Chief Dale Robertson. In 1990, 57 of the 122 national forest units returned more money than they expended. Contact: Jim Sanders (202) 447-3772.

HONEY PRODUCTION UP -- Honey production in 1990 was 11 percent above 1989 totals. Honey prices averaged 52.8 cents per pound, up 3 cents from the 1989 price of 49.8 cents per pound. During 1990, there were 3.19 million bee colonies producing honey, down 7 percent from last year. Yield per colony averaged 61.5 pounds -- up from the unusually low 51.4 pounds in 1989. Contact: Tom Kruchten (202) 475-4870.

'STINGOMETER' HELPS FIND AFRICANIZED BEES -- A USDA scientist has invented a "thermometer" for honeybees, which may help determine which colonies are Africanized. "If we quickly spot bees that have Type-A personalities, we can eliminate these very defensive bees before they invade domestic bee colonies," says Hayward G. Spangler. "We needed the meter because it's impossible to tell domestic bees from Africanized bees just by looking at them." The stingometer records how many stings a disturbed colony of bees makes during a given period. A high number means cranky bees -- especially the Africanized type. Contact: Hayward G. Spangler (602) 670-6380.

AG RESOURCES: INPUTS -- Tightening world fertilizer supplies & concern over the Persian Gulf have put upward pressure on prices. U.S. spring fertilizer prices will likely be 5 to 9 percent higher than last year. Fertilizer supplies will be adequate for anticipated use. Pesticide use on the ten major field crops in 1991 is projected to be up 16 million pounds from last year. Herbicide use is expected to rise 12.2 million pounds. Energy supply & price expectations for the U.S. ag sector reflect world crude oil market conditions. Contact: Stan Daberkow (202) 219-0456.

FARM LABOR -- During January, farm wages averaged \$6 per hour and there were 2.61 million people working on the nation's farms & ranches. The \$6 rate was up 30 cents from a year earlier. Contact: Tom Kurtz (202) 475-3228.

ANIMAL WELFARE REGULATIONS REVISED -- USDA has revised the regulations for the humane handling, care, treatment & transportation of dogs, cats & primates. "We worked hard to make animal care standards easy to understand, hoping to increase compliance and make the standards more effective," says **James W. Glosser**, administrator of USDA's Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service. The new standards will take effect March 18. **Contact: Sibyl Bowie (301) 436-7255.**

CONSERVATION COMPLIANCE PLANS -- Farmers have fully implemented conservation compliance plans on 40 percent of the nation's highly erodible cropland. "Farmers are now protecting a significant amount of land from erosion, but the biggest job is still ahead," says **William Richards**, chief of USDA's Soil Conservation Service. "Many farmers have agreed to conservation work that they're unfamiliar with -- structural practices like waterways and terraces and management practices like conservation tillage. This work has to be completed on schedule over the next four years." Farmers who have questions should contact SCS. **Contact: Diana Morse (202) 447-4772.**

USDA SEIZES NEGLECTED ANIMALS -- USDA has confiscated nine cougars, three bobcats, one African lion and one tiger from an animal dealer in Leesburg, Fla. "These animals lacked proper nourishment and veterinary care," says **James W. Glosser**, administrator of USDA's Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service. After considerable effort by USDA employees, the animals were relocated outside of Florida for care & keeping by another licensed dealer. The case has been referred to USDA's Office of General Counsel for prosecution. **Contact: Sibyl K. Bowie (301) 436-7255.**

MOTH'S SEX APPEAL -- Young female tobacco budworms raised indoors under close supervision are just as sexy as their wild sisters, say USDA scientists. Scientists wondered if the hybrid females, bred with a gene that sterilizes mates, might not be able to compete with wild females. Each time a hybrid female mates, says Entomologist **Marion L. Laster**, "a sterility time bomb" starts ticking within the colony. Her male offspring, besides being sterile and unable to perpetuate the species, waste the time of interested females looking for males. Female offspring, on the other hand, inherit the sterility-causing trait and spread it rapidly. **Contact: Marion L. Laster (601) 686-5231.**

SEED POTATOES FROM CANADA RESTRICTED -- USDA is restricting the import of some seed potatoes from Canada because a virus found on some Canadian potatoes can also attack tobacco, tomatoes and peppers. "We believe quick action is necessary to contain the spread of PVY-N, especially since Canada is the source of many seed potatoes planted in states where tobacco is an important crop," says **James W. Glosser**, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. Seed potatoes from Canada, except those from Prince Edward Island & New Brunswick where the strain has been detected, may be imported with a certificate identifying each seed lot. **Contact: Carree Lawrence (301) 436-7280.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1759 -- Scientists are now using all sorts of high tech gadgetry to figure out the various links between diet & weight control. On this edition of **Agriculture USA**, **Jim Henry** talks with a USDA physiologist about weight loss & the human metabolism. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1240 -- Food preparation safety; all mulch is not good mulch; coping with the drought; stretching limited water supplies; kids & science. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1748 -- USDA News Highlights; 1991 rice program provisions; California's water bank; cow brain power; U.S. exports more forest products to Spain. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1408 -- Monitoring free radicals; copper & blood pressure; copper & the kidney; copper & the lungs; the importance of boron. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Tues., March 5, weekly weather & crop update; Thurs., March 7, vegetable report; Mon., March 11, U.S. crop production, world supply & demand; Tues., March 12, weekly weather & crop, world ag grain situation, world oilseed situation, world cotton situation.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EST, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE
(Week of Feb. 21, 23 & 25)

FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on Black History Month activities at USDA.

ACTUALITIES -- SCS Chief William Richards on conservation compliance plan implementation; USDA Meteorologist Ray Motha on weather developments; USDA Economist Stan Duberkow on fertilizer use & prices; USDA Economist Ron Gustafson on livestock & poultry outlook; and USDA Economist Larry Van Meir on feed outlook.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- Lynn Wyvill reports on home-based businesses; Pat O'Leary reports on USDA science day for students; & DeBoria Janifer reports on USDA Workforce Diversity.

Available on Satellite Westar IV, Transponder 12D (Channel 23), audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EST
SATURDAY 10 - 10:45 a.m., EST
MONDAY 8 - 8:45 a.m., EST

OFFMIKE

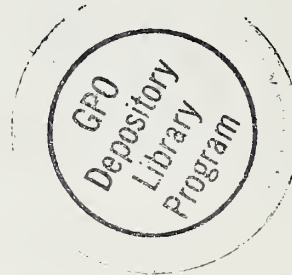
FARM BROADCASTERS...cover their territory to stay in touch with agricultural producers. **Max Molleston** (WKBF, Rock Island, Ill.) says he put 1,200 miles on his car in the last three weeks. He filed daily reports during the state conferences of Illinois and Iowa pork producers, attended a series of winter crop seminars, commodity banquets & spring hog shows to keep his listeners up to date with latest developments. Max says when he's on the road **Gayle Wittenberg** does the anchoring.

ANNUAL VISIT...to the nation's capital is being planned by **Gary Wergin** (KFEQ, St. Joseph, Mo.) accompanying a delegation of the Missouri Farm Bureau. February was a busy month covering state cattle producer meetings, FFA activities, corn growers & Farm Bureau gatherings. Gary says Missouri corn growers are urging that an ethanol manufacturing plant be located in the state. Meanwhile a highway department study notes a substantial reduction of gasoline tax revenue if ethanol use is greatly increased.

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Washington, D.C. 20250-1300

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SOYBEAN PRODUCERS...in six states served by **Ken Tanner** (Tobacco Radio Network, Raleigh, N.C.) tell him the meager returns last year on soybeans & peanuts will force them to use flex provisions of the farm bill to plant cotton in soy acres. But, Ken says, producers in Virginia & North Carolina who had excellent bean yields last year don't have the enthusiasm for cotton that those in Georgia, Alabama & South Carolina have.

TEMPERATURES...were in the 50's for two weeks, says **Tom Steever** (KS00, Sioux Falls, S.D.). It is unknown if the weather brought crops out of dormancy, but he says recent snowfall should protect the winter wheat region of the state.

MOVED...**Gary DiGiuseppe** from Brownfield Network, Jefferson City, Mo., to KWMT, Fort Dodge, Iowa, replacing **Doug Cooper** who moved to WOI, Ames, Iowa.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vic Powell".

VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division